



## **Moral Courage, Environmental Style**

### Discussion Questions and Activity Prompts

July 30, 2024

Below, you will find some discussion questions to help you engage with Rachel Fredericks' 2014 paper [Courage as an Environmental Virtue](#), as well as some activity/assignment prompts that you can use to put this philosophy to work.

#### *Discussion Questions*

1. Do you consider yourself to be concerned about the environment? Does that concern translate to action? How so?
2. When you consider taking action to support the environment but don't follow through, what sort of reasons prevent you from taking action, or explain your inaction? Are any of them good reasons? Compare your answers to Fredericks' arguments against common responses. Does she refute your reasoning?
3. Does lack of courage explain (at least some) of the instances of environmental inaction in your own life? In the lives of others you know? What else, besides lack of courage, do you think helps explain that inaction?
4. How could someone move from being an environmental coward to environmentally courageous? If it helps, think of a specific situation, and what it would take in that particular situation to make the transition.
5. What could be done to demonstrate support of environmental courage?
6. Who do you think of when you imagine an environmentally courageous person? What makes that person a good exemplar of environmental courage?

#### *Activity Prompts*

1. Think of examples of actions that you could possibly take that would require environmental moral courage. See if you can come up with a list that ranges in the amount of courage that would be required to perform the action. Recall that, for Fredericks, such acts deviate from the status quo in support of some specifically environmental good or right, or against some specifically environmental harm or violation of a right, for the right kinds of reasons, and that in acting, one treats other humans in morally appropriate ways, i.e., as subjects and not merely instrumentally. Of what would the actions be in service? What would the likely consequences of taking such actions be?

2. Choose one of these actions that you think you could actually commit to performing (with some courage!) and write a page reflecting on your own aversion/fear towards actually performing it. Then perform the action and write another page reflecting on the outcome of your action and how you felt afterwards.
  
3. Choose one of the actions that you don't yet have the courage to actually perform. Write a page explaining why you think this action would require courage that currently outstrips what you can muster, and describing what you think it would take for you to build up the courage to perform that action.